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PERFECT DAY,
AND OTHER POEMS.

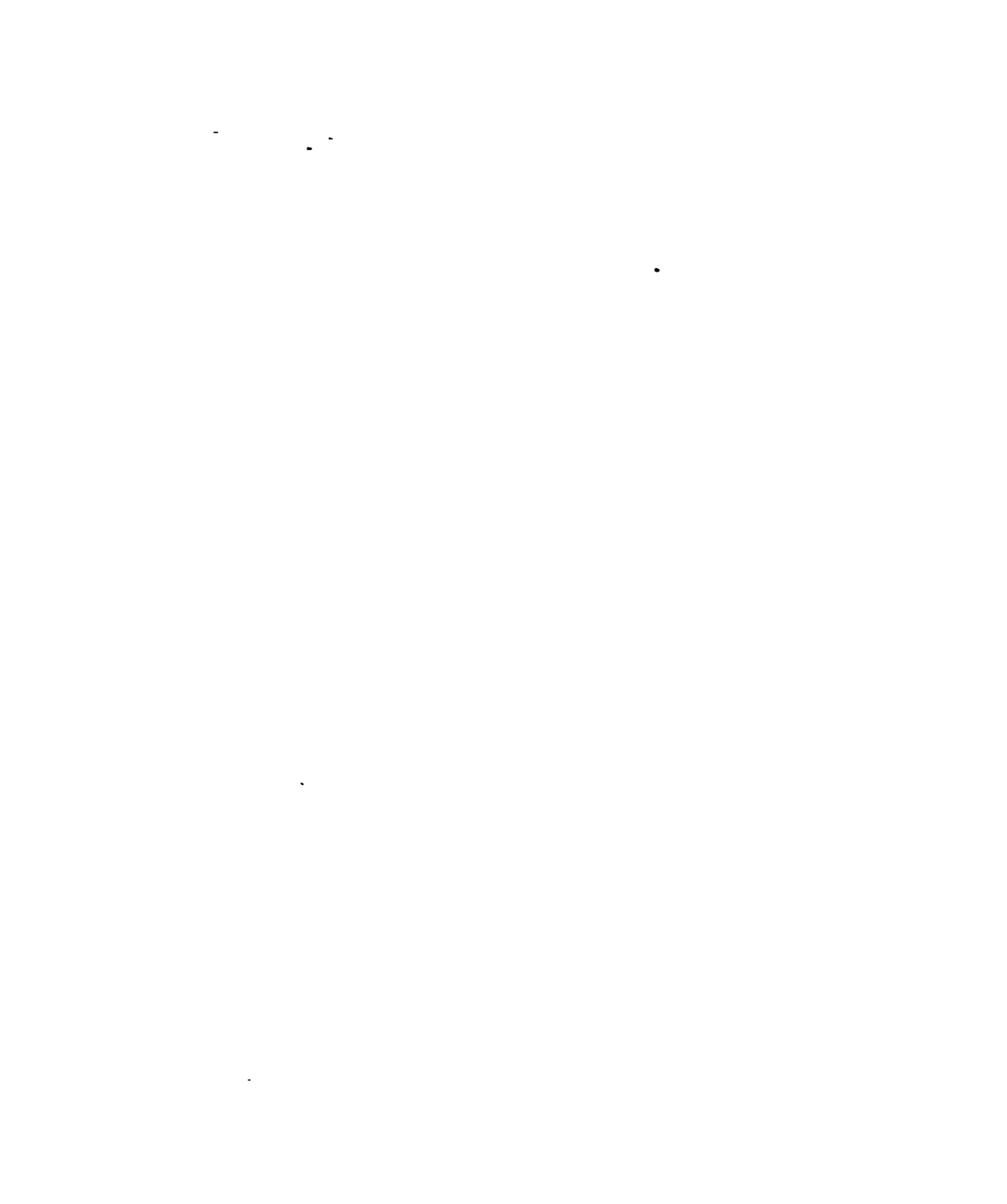


Ina W. Coolbrith



GIFT OF COOPER MEDICAL COLLEGE







PERFECT DAY,

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

INA D. COOLBRITH.

AUTHOR'S SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION EDITION.

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San Francisco, Cal.

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER:

IN WHOSE LIVING HANDS I ONCE HOPED TO PLACE
THIS LITTLE VOLUME, I NOW DEDICATE WHAT-
EVER OF WORTH IT MAY CONTAIN, WITH
ALL REVERENCE AND LOVE.

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*Though the dear tasks which once I knew
I know no more, it yet is mine,
Ere I am laid where thou art laid,
To place this wreath of rose and rue
Upon thy memory's sacred shrine,
O, thou beloved Shade!*

Starwood Library

A PERFECT DAY.



WILL be glad to-day : the sun

Smiles all adown the land ;

The lilies lean along the way ;

Serene on either hand,

The full - blown roses, red and
white,

In perfect beauty stand.

The mourning - dove within the woods

Forgets, nor longer grieves ;

A light wind lifts the bladed corn,

And ripples the ripe sheaves ;

High overhead some happy bird

Sings softly in the leaves.

The butterflies flit by, and bees ;

A peach falls to the ground ;

The tinkle of a bell is heard

From some far pasture - mound ;

The crickets in the warm, green grass

Chirp with a softened sound.

The sky looks down upon the sea,

Blue, with not anywhere

The shadow of a passing cloud ;

The sea looks up as fair —

So bright a picture on its breast

As if it smiled to wear.

A day too glad for laughter — nay,

Too glad for happy tears !
The fair earth seems as in a dream
Of immemorial years :
Perhaps of that far morn when she
Sang with her sister spheres.

It may be that she holds to-day
Some sacred Sabbath feast :
It may be that some patient soul
Has entered to God's rest,
For whose dear sake He smiles on us,
And all the day is blest.

IN BLOSSOM TIME.

IT'S O my heart, my heart,
To be out in the sun and sing!
To sing and shout in the fields about,
In the balm and the blossoming.

Sing loud, O bird in the tree;
O bird, sing loud in the sky,
And honey-bees, blacken the clover beds —
There are none of you glad as I.

The leaves laugh low in the wind,
Laugh low, with the wind at play;
And the odorous call of the flowers all
Entices my soul away!

For O but the world is fair, is fair —

And O but the world is sweet !

I will out in the gold of the blossoming mold,

And sit at the Master's feet.

And the love my heart would speak,

I will fold in the lily's rim,

That th' lips of the blossom, more pure and
meek,

May offer it up to Him.

Then sing in the hedgerow green, O thrush,

O skylark, sing in the blue :

Sing loud, sing clear, that the King may hear,

And my soul shall sing with you !

A HOPE.

IT befell me on a day—

Long ago ; ah, long ago !

When my life was in its May,

In the May-month of the year.

All the orchards were like snow

With pink-flushes there and here ;

And a bird sang, building near,

And a bird sang far away,

Where the early twilight lay.

Long ago ! ah, long ago !

Youth's sweet May passed quite away —

May that never more is May !

Yet I hear the nightingale

Singing far adown the vale
Where the early twilight lies,
Singing sad, and sweet, and strong :
And I wonder if the song
May be heard in Paradise !

AN ANSWER.

THE wind was very sad among the branches,
The moon had hid its light ;
I threw my window open to the darkness,
And looked out on the night ;

And thought of all the dear old times together,
Days sweet for her sweet sake,
And all I lost in losing her ; till, thinking,
My heart seemed like to break.

And O, I said, if I might have some token
She *is*, and yet is mine,

Though but a wind-tossed leaf, my soul would
take it,
And bless it, for the sign.

And lo! a little wind sighed through the branches,
The moon shone on the land,
And cool and moist with the night dew, a leaflet
Fluttered against my hand!

LONGING.

O FOOLISH wisdom sought in books !

O aimless fret of household tasks !

O chains that bind the hand and mind --

A fuller life my spirit asks !

For there the grand hills, summer-crowned,

Slope greechly downward to the seas ;

One hour of rest upon their breast

Were worth a year of days like these.

Their cool, soft green to ease the pain

Of eyes that ache o'er printed words ;

This weary voice — the city's voice,

Lulled in the sound of bees and birds.

For Eden's life within me stirs,
And scorns the shackles that I wear ;
The man-life grand : pure soul, strong hand,
The limb of steel, the heart of air !

And I could kiss, with longing wild,
Earth's dear brown bosom, loved so much,
A grass-blade fanned across my hand,
Would thrill me like a lover's touch.

The trees would talk with me ; the flowers
Their hidden meanings each make known—
The olden lore revived once more,
When man's and nature's heart were one !

And as the pardoned pair might come
Back to the garden God first framed,

And hear Him call at even-fall,

And answer, "Here am I," unshamed—

So I, from out these toils, wherein

The Eden-faith grows stained and dim,

Would walk, a child, through nature's wild,

And hear His voice and answer Him.

TWO.

ONE sang all day, more merry than the lark

That mounts the morning skies :

One silent sat, and lifted patient eyes.

One heart kept happy time, from dawn to dark,

With all glad things that be :

One, listless, throbbed alone to memory.

To one all blessed knowledge was revealed,

And love made clear the way :

One thirsted, asked, and still was answered nay.

To one, a glad, brief day, that slumber sealed

And kept inviolate :

To one, long years, that only knew to wait.

IN TIME OF FALLING LEAVES.

THE summer rose is dead ;
The sad leaves, witheréd,
Strew ankle-deep the pathways to our tread :
Dry grasses mat the plain,
And drifts of blossom slain ;
And day and night the wind is like a pain.

No nightingale to sing
In green boughs listening,
Through balmy twilight hushes of the spring :
No thrush, no oriole
In music to out-roll
The little golden raptures of his soul.

O royal summer - reign !

When will you come again,

Bringing the happy birds across the main ?

O blossoms ! when renew

Your pretty garbs, and woo

Your waiting, wild bee lovers back to you ?

For lo, my heart is numb ;

For lo, my heart is dumb,

Is silent till the birds and blossoms come !

A flower, that lieth cold

Under the wintry mold,

Waiting the warm spring - breathing to unfold.

O swallow ! all too slow

Over the waves you go,

Dipping your light wings in their sparkling flow.

Over the golden sea,

O swallow, flying free,

Fly swiftly with the summer back to me !

MY "CLOTH OF GOLD."

O BUT the wind is keen,
And the sky is dull as lead!
If only leaves were brown,
Were only withered and dead,
Perhaps I might not frown,
However the storm might beat;
But to see their delicate green
Tossing in wind and rain,
Whirling in lane and street,
Trampled in mud and dirt—
Alive to the winter pain,
To the sting and the hurt!

I wish they all were hid
In a fleecy coverlid ;
I wish I could bury the rose
Under the northern snows,
And make the land take off
The purple and red and buff,
And flamy tints that please
Her tropical Spanish taste,
And mantle her shapeliness,
Just once, in the delicate dress
Of her sisters, fairer faced,
Over the seas.

If but for a single day
This vivid, incessant green
Might vanish quite away,
And never a leaf be seen ;

And woods be brown and sere,

And flowers disappear :

If only I might not see

Forever the fruit on the tree,

 The rose on its stem !

For spring is sweet, and summer

Ever a blithe new-comer —

 But one tires even of them !

You were pleasant to behold,

 When days were warm and bland,

My beautiful "Cloth of Gold,"

 My rose of roses, nursed

 With careful, patient hand ;

 So sunny and content,

With butterflies about you,

 And bees that came and went,

And could not do without you :

But better to die at first,
With the earliest blossom born,
Than to live so crumpled and torn,
So dripping and forlorn.

Better that you should be

Safe houséd and asleep

Under the tough brown bark,

Like your kindred over the sea ;

Nor know if the day be drear,

Nor heed if the sky be dark,

If it rain or snow.

But ah ! to be captive here,

The live-long, dragging year,

To the skies that smile and weep ;

The skies that thrill and woo you,
That torture and undo you,
That lure and hold you so —
And will not let you go!

WHEN THE GRASS SHALL COVER ME.

WHEN the grass shall cover me,
Head to foot where I am lying;
When not any wind that blows,
Summer-blooms nor winter-snows,
Shall awake me to your sighing:
Close above me as you pass,
You will say, "How kind she was,"
You will say, "How true she was,"
When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me,
Holden close to earth's warm bosom;
While I laugh, or weep, or sing,
Nevermore, for anything,

You will find in blade and blossom,
Sweet small voices, odorous,
Tender pleaders in my cause,
That shall speak me as I was —
When the grass grows over me.

When the grass shall cover me !
Ah, beloved, in my sorrow
Very patient, I can wait,
Knowing that, or soon or late,
There will dawn a clearer morrow :
When your heart will moan : “ Alas !
Now I know how true she was ;
Now I know how dear she was ” —
When the grass grows over me !

THE MOTHER'S GRIEF.

SO fair the sun rose yester-morn,
The mountain cliffs adorning :
The golden tassels of the corn
Danced in the breath of morning ;
The cool, clear stream that runs before,
Such happy words was saying,
And in the open cottage door
My pretty babe was playing.
Aslant the sill a sunbeam lay :
I laughed in careless pleasure,
To see his little hand essay
To grasp the shining treasure.

To-day no shafts of golden flame

Across the sill are lying ;

To-day I call my baby's name,

And hear no lisped replying ;

To-day — ah, baby mine, to-day —

God holds thee in His keeping !

And yet I weep, as one pale ray

Breaks in upon thy sleeping —

I weep to see its shining bands

Reach, with a fond endeavor,

To where the little restless hands

Are crossed in rest forever !

AT SET OF SUN.

A LONG you purple rim of hills,
How bright the sunset glory lies!
Its radiance spans the western skies,
And all the slumbrous valley fills.

Broad shafts of lucid crimson, blent
With lustrous pearl in masséd white,
And one great spear of amber light
That flames o'er half the firmament.

Vague, murmurous sounds the breezes bear;
A thousand subtle breaths of balm,

Blown shoreward from the isles of calm,
Float in upon the tranced air.

And, muffling all its giant roar,
The restless waste of waters, rolled
To one broad sea of liquid gold,
Moves singing up the shining shore!

"TO-MORROW IS TOO FAR AWAY."

TO-MORROW is too far away !

A bed of spice the garden is,

Nor bud nor blossom that we miss ;

The roses tremble on the stem,

The violets and anemones :

Why should we wait to gather them ?

Their bloom and balm are ours to-day,

To-morrow — who can say ?

To-morrow is too far away.

Why should we slight the joy complete,

The flower open at our feet ?

For us to-day the robin sings,
His curvéd flight the swallow wings,
For us the happy moments stay.

Stay yet, nor leave us all too fleet!
For life is sweet, and youth is sweet,
And love—ah, love is sweet to-day,
To-morrow—who can say?

THE YEARS.

WHAT do I owe the years, that I should bring
Green leaves to crown them King?
Blown, barren sands, the thistle, and the brier,
Dead hope, and mocked desire,
And sorrow, vast and pitiless as the sea :
These are their gifts to me.

What do I owe the years, that I should love
And sing the praise thereof?
Perhaps, the lark's clear carol wakes with morn,
And winds, amid the corn,
Clash fairy cymbals ; but I miss the joys,
Missing the tender voice —

Sweet as a throstle's after April rain—

That may not sing again.

What do I owe the years, that I should greet

Their bitter, and not sweet.

With wine, and wit, and laughter? Rather thrust

The wine-cup to the dust!

What have they brought to me, these many years?

Silence, and bitter tears.

IF ONLY.

IF only in my dreams I once might see
Thy face! though thou shouldst stand
With cold, unreaching hand,
Nor vex thy lips to break
The silence, with a word for my love's sake;
Nor turn to mine thine eyes,
Serene with the long peace of Paradise,
Yet, henceforth, life would be
Made sweet, not wholly bitter unto me.

If only I might know for verity,
That when the light is done
Of this world's sun,
And that unknown, long-sealed

To sound and sight, is suddenly revealed,
That thine should be the first dear voice thereof,
And thy dear face the first—O love, my love!
Then coming death would be
Sweet, ah, most sweet, not bitter unto me!

SAILED.

O SHINING, sapphire sea !

From thy bosom put away

Every vexing thought to-day ;

Smile through all thy dimpling spray :

All that earth contains for me,

Of love, and truth, and purity,

Trust I unto thee !

O foam-flecked, azure sea !

Let thy calm, untroubled waves,

By the softest gales caressed,

Rise and fall like love-beats in

Her timid maiden breast ;

Let thy dreamiest melodies

Cradle her to rest.

O wild, white, mystic sea !

Let thy strong upholding arm

Tender as a lover's be ;

Let no breath of rude alarm

Mar her heart's tranquillity ;

Through the sunshine, past the storm,

Bear her safe from every harm,

Once again to me !

NOT YET.

NOT yet from the yellow west,

Fade, light of the autumn day :

Far lies my haven of rest,

And rough the way.

She has waited long, my own !

And the night is dark and drear

To meet alone.

Not yet, with the leaves that fall,

Fall, rose of the wayside thorn,

Fair and most sweet of all

The summer-born.

But O, for my rose that stands,
And waits, through the lessening year,
My gathering hands!

Fail not, O my life, so fast —
Fail not till we shall have met:
Soon, soon will thy pulse be past,
But oh, not yet! —
Till her fond eyes on me shine,
And the heart so dear, so dear,
Beats close to mine.

"WHILE LILIES BUD AND BLOW."

WHILE lilies bud and blow,

While roses grow,

And trees wave greenly in the sun—

Wave greenly to and fro:

And ring-doves coo and coo,

And skies drop dew,

And th' throstle pipes above the nest

His wee mate broods upon,

How can one choose but sing

Of joy, love—every thing!

While the north wind sobs and grieves,

While the trees drop leaves,

And scentless, budless meadows lie
Bare to the beating rain;
And the birds are grown and flown,
And the nests are lone,
And love, like closing day,
Grows cold, grows old and gray—
How can one help but sigh,
While night draws nigh,
And darkly runs the river to the main!

A little plot where showers
May bring forth flowers—
Poppies, mandragora, and all sweet balm!
Ah me! who can but smile?
Only a little while,
And hearts forget to ache,
And eyes to wake;

The grass clasps softly velvet palm with palm
Above the quiet breast,
And hope, and God's white angels, know the rest!

CALIFORNIA.

COMMENCEMENT POEM, WRITTEN FOR THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA, JULY, 1871.

WAS it the sigh and shiver of the leaves?
Was it the murmur of the meadow brook,
That in and out the reeds and water-weeds
Slipped silverly, and on their tremulous keys
Uttered her many melodies? Or voice
Of the far sea, red with the sunset gold,
That sang within her shining shores, and sang
Within the Gate, that in the sunset shone
A gate of fire against the outer world?

For ever as I turned the magic page
Of that old song the old, blind singer sang

Unto the world, when it and song were young—
The ripple of the reeds, or odorous,
Soft sigh of leaves, or voice of the far sea—
A mystical, low murmur, tremulous
Upon the wind, came in with musk of rose,
The salt breath of the waves, and far, faint smell
Of laurel up the slopes of Tamalpais. . . .

“Am I less fair, am I less fair than these,
Daughters of far-off seas?
Daughters of far-off shores—bleak, over-blown
With foam of fretful tides, with wail and moan
Of waves, that toss wild hands, that clasp and beat
Wild, desolate hands above the lonely sands,
Printed no more with pressure of their feet :
That chase no more the light feet flying swift

Up golden sands, nor lift
Foam fingers white unto their garment hem,
And flowing hair of them.

“For these are dead : the fair, great queens are
dead !

The long hair's gold a dust the wind bloweth
Wherever it may list ;
The curv'd lips, that kissed
Heroes and kings of men, a dust that breath,
Nor speech, nor laughter, ever quickeneth ;
And all the glory sped
From the large, marvelous eyes, the light whereof
Wrought wonder in their hearts—desire, and love!
And wrought not any good :
But strife, and curses of the gods, and flood,
And fire and battle-death !

Am I less fair, less fair,
Because that my hands bear
Neither a sword, nor any flaming brand
To blacken and make desolate my land,
But on my brows are leaves of olive boughs,
And in mine arms a dove !

“Sea-born and goddess, blossom of the foam,
Pale Aphrodite, shadowy as a mist
Not any sun hath kissed !
Tawny of limb *I* roam,
The dusks of forests dark within my hair ;
The far Yosemite,
For garment and for covering of me,
Wove the white foam and mist,
The amber and the rose and amethyst
Of her wild fountains, shaken loose in air.

And I am of the hills and of the sea :
Strong with the strength of my great hills, and
calm

With calm of the fair sea, whose billowy gold
Girdles the land whose queen and love I am !

Lo ! am I less than thou,
That with a sound of lyres, and harp-playing,
Not any voice doth sing
The beauty of mine eyelids and my brow?
Nor hymn in all my fair and gracious ways,
And lengths of golden days,
The measure and the music of my praise?

“Ah, what indeed is this
Old land beyond the seas, that ye should miss
For her the grace and majesty of mine?
Are not the fruit and vine

Fair on my hills, and in my vales the rose?

The palm-tree and the pine

Strike hands together under the same skies

In every wind that blows.

What clearer heavens can shine

Above the land whereon the shadow lies

Of her dead glory, and her slaughtered kings,

And lost, evanished gods?

Upon my fresh green sods

No king has walked to curse and desolate :

But in the valleys Freedom sits and sings,

And on the heights above ;

Upon her brows the leaves of olive boughs,

And in her arms a dove ;

And the great hills are pure, undesecrate,

White with their snows untrod,

And mighty with the presence of their God !

“Hearken, how many years
I sat alone, I sat alone and heard
Only the silence stirred
By wind and leaf, by clash of grassy spears,
And singing bird that called to singing bird.
Heard but the savage tongue
Of my brown savage children, that among
The hills and valleys chased the buck and doe,
And round the wigwam fires
Chanted wild songs of their wild savage sires,
And danced their wild, weird dances to and fro,
And wrought their beaded robes of buffalo.
Day following upon day,
Saw but the panther crouched upon the limb,
Smooth serpents, swift and slim,
Slip through the reeds and grasses, and the bear
Crush through his tangled lair

Of chapparal, upon the startled prey!

“Listen, how I have seen
Flash of strange fires in gorge and black ravine;
Heard the sharp clang of steel, that came to drain
The mountain’s golden vein—
And laughed and sang, and sang and laughed
again,
Because that ‘now,’ I said, ‘I shall be known!
I shall not sit alone;
But reach my hands unto my sister lands!
And they? Will they not turn
Old, wondering dim eyes to me, and yearn—
Aye, they will yearn, in sooth,
To my glad beauty, and my glad fresh youth!’

“What matters though the morn

Redden upon my singing fields of corn !
What matters though the wind's unresting feet
 Ripple the gold of wheat,
 And my vales run with wine,
 And on these hills of mine
The orchard boughs droop heavy with ripe fruit?
 When with nor sound of lute
Nor lyre, doth any singer chant and sing
 Me, in my life's fair spring :
The matin song of me in my young day?
But all my lays and legends fade away
From lake and mountain to the farther hem
Of sea, and there be none to gather them.

 " Lo ! I have waited long !
How longer yet must my strung harp be dumb,
 Ere its great master come ?

Till the fair singer comes to wake the strong,
Rapt chords of it unto the new, glad song!

Him a diviner speech

My song-birds wait to teach:

The secrets of the field

My blossoms will not yield

To other hands than his;

And, lingering for this,

My laurels lend the glory of their boughs

To crown no narrower brows.

For on his lips must wisdom sit with youth;

And in his eyes, and on the lids thereof,

The light of a great love—

And on his forehead, truth!"

Was it the wind, or the soft sigh of leaves,
Or sound of singing waters? Lo, I looked,

And saw the silvery ripples of the brook,
The fruit upon the hills, the waving trees,
And mellow fields of harvest; saw the Gate
Burn in the sunset: the thin thread of mist
Creep white across the Saucelito hills;
Till the day darkened down the ocean rim,
The sunset purple slipped from Tamalpais,
And bay and sky were bright with sudden stars!

HOW LOOKED THE EARTH?

HOW looked the earth unto His eyes,
So lately closed on Paradise?

Clad all in purity
Of snowy raiment, as a bride
That waiteth for her lord to see—
That waiteth in her love and pride?

Was the snow white on fields and rocks,
Whereon the shepherds watched their flocks
In the mid-winter night?
And saw the angel, clothed in white,
The heavenly gates that opened wide,
In midst whereof was One

They dared not gaze upon !
Snow hither, thither, and afar,
Beneath the new, mysterious star?
Snow upon Lebanon,
Whose cedars stood, a crystal net
Of frost-work, beautiful to see?
Snow upon Olivet—
Snow upon awful Calvary?

Found He it fair to look upon,
Beneath the wooing of the sun?
The turf whereon He trod,
Did he not bend His glance to greet?
The daisy glancing from the sod,
The lily slim and tall;
The ferny banks of sheltered nooks,
The singing voice within the brooks,

Each slender blade of grass that sprang,
The tender shade of leafy ways,
Each little bird that sang
Its wee heart out in praise—
I think He found them sweet,
He knew and loved them all.

LOVE IN LITTLE.

BECAUSE the rose the bloom of blossoms is,
 And queenliest in beauty and in grace,
 The violet's tender blue we love no less,
 Or daisy, glancing up with shy, sweet face.

For all the music which the forest has,
 The ocean waves, that crash upon the beach,
 Still would we miss the whisper of the grass;
 • The hum of bees; the brooklet's silver speech.

We would not have the timid wood-thrush mute
 Because the bul-bul more divinely sings,

Nor lose the scarlet of dear robin's throat,
For all the tropics' flash of golden wings.

So do I think, though weak we be, and small,
Yet is there One whose care is none the less :
Who finds, perchance, some grain of worth in all,
Or loves us for our very humbleness !

• NO MORE.

NAY, then, what can be done
When love is flown,
When love has passed away?
Sit in the twilight gray,
Thinking how near he was,
Thinking how dear he was,
That is no more, to-day!

How can the day be fair
Love may not share?
How day go by,
Hearing no fond words said,

With no dear kisses shed—
O, how can love be dead,
And yet not I!

WITHHELD.

THEREIN is sunlight, and sweet sound :

Cool flow of waters, musical ;

Soft stir of insect-wings, and fall

Of blossom-snow upon the ground.

The birds flit in and out the trees,

Their bright, sweet throats strained full with
song.

The flower-beds, the summer long,
Are black and murmurous with bees.

Th' unrippled leaves hang faint with dew
In hushes of the breezeless morn ;

At eventide the stars, new born,
And the white moonlight, glimmer through.

Therein are all glad things whereof
Life holdeth need through changing years;
Therein sweet rest, sweet end of tears;
Therein sweet labors, born of love.

This is my heritage, mine own,
That alien hands from me withhold.
From barréd windows, dark and cold,
I view, with heart that maketh moan.

They fetter feet and hands; they give
Me bitter, thankless tasks to do;
And, cruel wise, still feed anew
My one small hope, that I may live.

And, that no single pang I miss,

Lo! this one little window-space

Is left, where through my eyes may trace

How sweeter than all sweet it is!

A SONG OF THE SUMMER WIND.

BALMILY, balmily, summer wind,
Sigh through the mountain passes ;
Over the sleep of the beautiful deep,
Over the woods' green masses—
Ripple the grain of valley and plain,
And the reeds and the river grasses.

How many songs, O summer wind,
How many songs you know
Of fair, sweet things in your wanderings,
As over the earth you go,
To the Norland bare and bleak, from where
The red south roses blow.

Where the red south blossoms blow, O wind,

(Sing low to me, low and stilly!)

And the golden green of the citrons lean

To the white of the saintly lily;

Where the sun-rays drowse in the orange boughs.

(Sing, sing, for the heart grows chilly!)

And the belted bee hangs heavily

In rose and daffodilly.

I know a song, O summer wind,

A song of a willow-tree:

Soft as the sweep of its fringes deep

In languorous swoons of tropic noons,

But sad as sad can be!

Yet I would you might sing it, summer wind,

I would you might sing it me.

(O tremulous, musical murmur of leaves!

O mystical melancholy

Of waves, that call from the far sea-wall!—

Shall I render your meaning wholly,

Ere the day shall wane to the night again,

And the stars come, slowly, slowly?)

I would you might sing me, summer wind,

A song of a little chamber:

Sing soft, sing low, how the roses grow,

And the starry jasmines clamber;

Through the emerald rifts how the moonlight
drifts,

And the sunlight's mellow amber.

Sing of a hand in the fluttering leaves,

Like a wee white bird in its nest:

Of a white hand twined in the leaves to find

A bloom for the fair young breast;
Sing of my love, my little love,
My snow-white dove in her nest,
As she looks through the fragrant jasmine leaves
Into the wasting west.

Tenderly, tenderly, summer wind,
With murmurous word-caresses,
O, wind of the south, to her beautiful mouth
Did you cling with your balmy kisses?
Flutter and float o'er the white, white throat,
And ripple the golden tresses?

"The long year groweth from green to gold,"

Saith the song of the willow-tree:

"My tresses cover, my roots enfold,"

O, summer wind, sing it me!

Lorn and dreary, sad and weary,

As lovers that parted be—

But sweet as the grace of a fair young face

I never again may see!

A FANCY.

I THINK I would not be
A stately tree,
Broad-boughed, with haughty crest that seeks
the sky !
Too many sorrows lie
In years, too much of bitter for the sweet !
Frost-bite, and blast, and heat,
Blind drought, cold rains, must all grow wearisome,
Ere one could put away,
Their leafy garb for aye,
And let death come.

Rather this wayside flower!
To live its happy hour
Of balmy air, of sunshine, and of dew.
A sinless face held upward to the blue;
A bird-song sung to it,
A butterfly to flit
On dazzling wings above it, hither, thither—
A sweet surprise of life—and then exhale
A little fragrant soul on the soft gale,
To float—ah, whither!

CUPID KISSED ME.

LOVE and I, one summer day,
Took a walk together;
O, how beautiful the way
Through the blooming heather!
Far-off bells rang matin-chimes,
Birds sang, silver-voicing,
And our happy hearts beat time
To the earth's rejoicing.
Well-a-day! ah, well-a-day!
Then pale grief had missed me,
And mirth and I kept company
Ere Cupid kissed me!

Love ran idly where he would,

Child-like, all unheeding ;

I as carelessly pursued

The pathway he was leading :

Till upon the shadowed side

Of a cool, swift river,

Where the sunbeams smote the tide,

Goldenly a-quiver—

Well-a-day ! ah, well-a-day !

“Love,” I cried, “come rest thee.”

Ah, but heart and I were gay

Ere Cupid kissed me !

Shadows of a summer cloud

Fell on near and far land ;

Fragrantly the branches bowed

Every leafy garland ;

While with shining head at rest, .

Next my heart reclining,

Love's white arms, with soft caress,

Round my neck were twining.

Well-a-day! ah, well-a-day!

Love who can resist thee?

On the river-banks that day

Cupid kissed me!

Woe is me! in cheerless plight,

By the cold, sad river,

Seek I Love, who taken flight,

Comes no more forever:

Love from whom more pain than bliss

Every heart obtaineth,

For the joy soon vanished is

While the pang remaineth.

Well-a-day! ah, well-a-day!

Would, Love, I had missed thee,

Peace and I are twain for aye,

Since Cupid kissed me.

SUMMER PAST.

NOW the summer all is over!
 We have wandered through the clover,
 We have plucked in wood and lea
 Blue-bell and anemone.

We were children of the sun,
 Very brown to look upon :
 We were stained, hands and lips,
 With the berries' juicy tips.

And I think that we may know
 Where the rankest nettles grow,
 And where oak and ivy weave
 Crimson glories to deceive.

Now the merry days are over!
Woodland-tenants seek their cover,
And the swallow leaves again
For his castle-nests in Spain.

Shut the door, and close the blind :
We shall have the bitter wind,
We shall have the dreary rain
Striving, driving at the pane.

Send the ruddy fire-light higher ;
Draw your easy chair up nigher ;
Through the winter, bleak and chill,
We may have our summer still.

Here are poems we may read,
Pleasant fancies to our need :

Ah, eternal summer-time,
Dwells within the poet's rhyme!

All the birds' sweet melodies
Linger in these songs of his;
And the blossoms of all ages
Waft their fragrance from his pages.

WITH A WREATH OF LAUREL.

O WINDS, that ripple the long grass !
O winds, that kiss the jeweled sea !

Grow still and lingering as you pass

About this laurel tree.

Great Shasta knew you in the cloud

That turbans his white brow ; the sweet,

Cool rivers ; and the woods that bowed

Before your pinions fleet.

With meadow scents your breath is rife ;

With red-wood odors, and with pine :

Now pause and thrill with twofold life,

Each spicy leaf I twine.

The laurel grows upon the hill
That looks across the western sea.
O winds, within the boughs be still,
O sun, shine tenderly,

And birds, sing soft about your nests :
I twine a wreath for other lands ;
A grave ! nor wife nor child has blest
With touch of loving hands.

Where eyes are closed, divine and young,
Dusked in a night no morn may break,
And hushed the poet lips that sung,
The songs none else may wake :

Unfelt the venom'd arrow-thrust,
Unheard the lips that hiss *disgrace*,

While the sad heart is dust, and dust
The beautiful, sad face !

For him I pluck the laurel crown !
It ripened in the western breeze,
Where Saucelito's hills look down
Upon the golden seas ;

And sunlight lingered in its leaves
From dawn, until the scarce dimmed sky
Changed to the light of stars ; and waves
Sang to it constantly.

I weave, and strive to weave a tone,
A touch, that, somehow, when it lies
Upon his sacred dust, alone,
Beneath the English skies,

The sunshine of the arch it knew,
The calm that wrapt its native hill,
The love that wreathed its glossy hue,
May breathe around it still !

OWNERSHIP.

IN a garden that I know,
Only palest blossoms blow.

There the lily, purest nun,
Hides her white face from the sun,

And the maiden rose-bud stirs
In a garment fair as hers.

One shy bird, with folded wings,
Sits within the leaves and sings;

Sits and sings the daylight long,
Just a patient plaintive song.

Other gardens greet the spring
With a blaze of blossoming ;

Other song-birds, piping clear,
Chorus from the branches near :

But my blossoms, palest known,
Bloom for me and me alone ;

And my bird, though sad and lonely,
Sings for me, and for me only.

IN THE POUTS.

CHEEKS of an ominous crimson,
 Eye-brows arched to a frown,
Pretty red lips a-quiver
 With holding their sweetness down ;

Glance that is never lifted
 From the hands that, in cruel play,
Are tearing the white-rose petals,
 And tossing their hearts away.

Only to think that a whisper,
 An idle, meaningless jest,
Should stir such a world of passion
 In a dear, little, loving breast !

Yet ever for such light trifles

Will lover and lass fall out,

And the humblest lad-grow haughty,

And the gentlest maiden pout.

Of course, I must sue for pardon ;

For what I can hardly say !—

But, deaf to opposing reason,

A woman will have her way.

And when, in despite her frowning,

The scorn, the grief, and the rue,

She looks so bewitchingly pretty,

Why, what can a fellow do?

SIESTA.

IF I lie at ease in the cradling trees,
Till the day drops down in the golden seas,
Till the light shall die from the warm, wide sky,
And the cool night cover me — what care I?

All as one when the day is done,
The woven woof or the web unspun :
In my leafy nest I will lie at rest,
A careless dreamer, and that is best.

Does a brown eye wake for a trouble's sake,
Ye little tenants of wood and brake?
What deeper woe does a wild-bee know
Than to vex the heart of a honey-blow?

Bonny birds, sing to me ; butterflies, wing to me ;
Slender convolvulus, flutter and cling to me ;
Dim spice-òdors and meadow-musk,
Blow about me from dawn to dusk !

Though the city frown from her hill-tops brown,
And the weary toilers go up and down,
I will lie at rest in my leafy nest,
A careless dreamer, and that is best.

IN MEMORIAM.

HON. B. P. AVERY DIED IN PEKING, CHINA, NOV. 8, 1875.

GOD rest thy soul !
O, kind and pure,

Tender of heart, yet strong to wield control,
And to endure !

Close the clear eyes !

No greater woe

• Earth's patient heart, than when a good man dies,
Can ever know.

With us is night,

Toil without rest ;

But where thy gentle spirit walks in light,

The ways are blest.

God's peace be thine !

God's perfect peace !

Thy meed of faithful service, until time

And death shall cease.

TWO PICTURES.

MORNING.

AS in a quiet dream,
The mighty waters seem :
Scarcely a ripple shows
Upon their blue repose.

The sea-gulls smoothly ride
Upon the drowsy tide,
And a white sail doth sleep
Far out upon the deep.

A dreamy purple fills
The hollows of the hills ;

A single cloud floats through
The sky's serenest blue ;

And far beyond the Gate,
The masséd vapors wait—
White as the walls that ring
The City of the King.

There is no sound, no word :
Only a happy bird
Trills to her nestling young,
A little, sleepy song.

This is the holy calm ;
The heavens dropping balm ;
The Love made manifest,
And near ; the perfect rest.

EVENING.

The day grows wan and cold :
In through the Gate of Gold
The restless vapors glide,
Like ghosts upon the tide.

The brown bird folds her wing,
Sad, with no song to sing.
Along the streets the dust
Blows sharp, with sudden gust.

The night comes, chill and gray ;
Over the sullen bay,
What mournful echoes pass
From lonely Alcatraz !

O bell, with solemn toll,

As for a passing soul !
As for a soul that waits,
In vain, at heaven's gates !

This is the utter blight ;
The sorrow infinite
Of earth ; the closing wave ;
The parting, and the grave.

LONELINESS.

THE waning moon was up ; the stars
Were faint, and very few ;
The vines about the window-sill
Were wet with falling dew ;

A little cloud before the wind
Was drifting down the west ;
I heard the moaning of the sea
In its unquiet rest ;

Until, I know not from what grief,
Or thought of other years,
The hand I leaned upon was cold,
And wet with falling tears.

BESIDE THE DEAD.

IT must be sweet, O thou, my dead, to lie
With hands that folded are from every task ;
Sealed with the seal of the great mystery —
The lips that nothing answer, nothing ask.
The life-long struggle ended ; ended quite
The weariness of patience, and of pain ;
And the eyes closed to open not again
On desolate dawn or dreariness of night.
It must be sweet to slumber and forget ;
To have the poor tired heart so still at last :
Done with all yearning, done with all regret,
Doubt, fear, hope, sorrow, all forever past :
Past all the hours, or slow of wing or fleet—
It must be sweet, it must be very sweet !

THE ROAD TO SCHOOL.

A MEADOW greenly carpeted ;
 A strip of woodland, brown and cool,
 Through which the wandering pathway led
 Unto the village school :

The little pathway he and I,
 Across the happy summer-land,
 In happy summer times gone by,
 Trod, daily, hand in hand.

The mountain stream, far off, that drew
 Its glittering length across the farm,
 Reached softly down the vale, and threw
 The path one cool, white arm ;

And careless as the truant tide
That flashed its crystal in the sun,
Or slipped along the woodland side,
Our wayward feet would run.

Through tangled ferns, up furzy slopes,
Where the broad forest shadows fell,
Through golden seas of buttercups,
Wind-rippled, down the dell;

We plashed the foamy water-brink,
We followed on the rabbit's track,
And rang the merry bobolink
His saucy challenge back.

How tenderly, from stone to stone,
Where the deep stream ran swift and clear, .

He led my timid footsteps on —

My gay, young cavalier !

He knew each haunt of bird and bee ;

The secret of each nestling brood ;

He mimicked every melody

That thrilled the listening wood ;

With many a carved and quaint design,

Would fashion acorns into beads,

Chains of the needles of the pine,

And whistles out of reeds.

Ah ! many a time the brave voice spake,

An earnest pleader in my cause ;

The tanned, round hand went out to take

Dire strokes for broken laws ;

And many a prompting, timely said,

The master's dreaded anger turned

From the small, idle, flaxen head

Whose tasks were yet unlearned !

What quaint, sweet summer gifts he brought !

A white pond-lily, filled to th' brim

With scarlet berries ; buds, half shut ;

Gold fruits on leaf and limb ;

Some wide-blown flower with tawny dyes ;

A butterfly with jeweled wing,

Or captive bird, with frightened eyes

And wee heart, fluttering.

Dear playmate ! in those golden ways

Your heart found rest ; my heart endures :

But, through the weary days and days,
Life gives no love like yours !

Life gives no faith ! Ah, child-mate, dear,
When the appointed years shall fall
From off me, as a cloud, and near
And clear I hear the call—

And the new way is strange to me,
Reach thou, and lead me, hand-in-hand,
As down the path of old, till we
Before the Master stand !

There yet once more thy brave voice raise,
O playmate ! in thy truant's cause,
For tasks unlearned, for wasted days,
For all His broken laws !

WHO KNOWETH?

WHO knoweth the hope that was born to me,
When the spring-time came with its greenery!
With orchard blossoming, fair to see,
With drone of beetle, and buzz of bee,
And robin a trill on his apple-tree,
Cheerily, cheerily!

Who knoweth the hope that was dead—ah me!
That was dead—and never again to be,
When the winter came, all dismally,
With desolate rain on desolate sea;
With cold snow-blossoms for wood and lea,
And the wind a-moan in the apple-tree,
Drearily, drearily!

MARAHA.

“**T**HE song were sweeter and better
If only the thought were glad.”

Be hidden the chafe of the fetter,
The scars of the wounds you have had ;
Be silent of strife and endeavor,
But shout of the victory won !
You may sit in the shadow forever,
If only you'll sing of the sun.

There are hearts, you must know, over tender
With the wine of the joy-cup of years ;
One might dim for a moment the splendor
Of eyes unaccustomed to tears :

So sing, if you must, with the gladness
 That brimmed the lost heart of your youth,
 Lest you breathe, in the song and its sadness,
 The secret of life at its truth.

O, violets, born of the valley,
 You are sweet in the sun and the dew,
 But your sisters, in yonder dim alley,
 Are sweeter—and paler—than you!
 O, birds, you are blithe in the meadow,
 But your mates of the forest I love;
 And sweeter their songs in its shadow,
 Though sadder the singing thereof!

To the weary in life's wildernesses
 The soul of the singer belongs:
 Small need, in your green, sunny places,

Glad dwellers, have you of my songs.
For you the blithe birds of the meadow
Trill silverly sweet, every one,
But I can not sit in the shadow
Forever, and sing of the sun.

THE COMING.

I GATHERED flowers the summer long ;

I dozed the days on sunny leas,
And wove my fancies into song,
Or dreamed in aimless ease.

Or watched, from jutting cliffs, the dyes
Of changeful waters under me,
The lazy gulls just dip and rise,
White specks upon the sea—

And far away, where blue to blue
Was wed, the ships that came and went ;
And thought, O happy world ! and drew
Therefrom a full content.

My mates toiled in the ripening field,
Nor paused for rest in cool or heat;
The yellow grain made haste to yield
Its harvesting complete :

My mates toiled in their pleasant homes,
They plucked the fruit from laden boughs,
And sang—"For if the Master comes
And find no ready house!"—

And far and strange their singing seemed,
And harsh the voices every one,
That woke the pleasant dream I dreamed
To thought of tasks undone.

Yet still I waited, lingered still,
Won by a cloud, a soaring lark ;

Till, by-and-by, the land was chill,
And all the sky was dark.

And lo, the Master!—Through the night
My mates come forth to welcome Him :
Their labor done, their garments white,
While mine are stained and dim.

They bring to Him their golden sheaves,
To Him their finished toil belongs,
While I have but these withered leaves,
And these poor, foolish songs!

REBUKE.

“**T**HE world is old and the world is cold,
And never a day is fair,” I said.

Out of the heavens the sunlight rolled,
The green leaves rustled above my head,
And the sea was a sea of gold.

“The world is cruel,” I said again,
“Her voice is harsh to my shrinking ear,
And the nights are dreary and full of pain.”

Out of the darkness, sweet and clear,
There rippled a tender strain :

Rippled the song of a bird asleep,
That sang in a dream of the budding wood ;

Of shining fields where the reapers reap,
Of a wee brown mate and a nestling brood,
And the grass where the berries peep.

“The world is false, though the world be fair,
And never a heart is pure,” I said.
And lo! the clinging of white arms bare,
The innocent gold of my baby’s head,
And the lisp of a childish prayer!

DISCIPLINE.

UPON the patient earth
A thousand tempests beat,
To call to life the flowers
That make her glad and sweet.

So, o'er the human heart,
The countless griefs that roll,
But wake immortal joy
To bloom within the soul.

AT PEACE.

SHUT close the wearied eyes, O Sleep !

So close no dreams may come between,

Of all the sorrows they have seen ;

Too long, too sad, their watch hath been.

Be faithful, Sleep :

Lest they should wake—remembering ;

Lest they should wake, and waking weep,

O Sleep, sweet Sleep !

Clasp close the wearied hands, O Rest !

Poor hands, so thin and feeble grown

With all the tasks which they have done ;

Now they are finished—every one.

O happy Rest,

Fold them at last from laboring,
In quiet on the quiet breast,

O Rest, sweet Rest !

Press close unto her heart, O Death !

So close, not any pulse may stir

The garments of her sepulchre :

Lo, life hath been so sad to her !

O kindest Death,

Within thy safest sheltering

Nor pain nor sorrow entereth —

O Death, sweet Death !

UNGATHERED.

NEVER a leaf is shorn
 But the vine surely misses ;
 From ministering night-dews torn,
 From the sun's kisses.

Dozing the warm light in,
 In cool winds rustling greenly—
 A leaflet with its leafy kin
 Dwelling serenely.

Not ever bud doth fall
 With blighted leaves yet folden—
 Never to wear its coronal
 Or white or golden—

But from the mother-stem

Flutters a far, faint sighing :

Is it a tender requiem

Above the dying?

Who knows what dear regrets

Cling to the blossom broken?

Who knows what voiceless longing frets,

What love unspoken.

So through the summer-shine,

Your frail, brief lives securely

Keep, all ye tender blossoms mine,

Looking up purely.

Enough to breathe the air

Made sweet with your perfuming ;

To see through golden days your fair
And perfect blooming :

The bees that round you hum,
The butterflies that woo you—
And happy, happy birds that come
And sing unto you.

LA FLOR DEL SALVADOR.

THE Daffodil sang : “ Darling of the sun
Am I, am I, that wear
His colors everywhere.”

The Violet pleaded soft, in undertone :
“ Am I less perfect made,
Or hidden in the shade
So close and deep, that heaven may not see
Its own fair hue in me?”

The Rose stood up, full-blown,
Right royal as a Queen upon her throne :
“ Nay, but I reign alone,”
She said, “ with all hearts for my very own.”

One whispered, with faint flush, not far away :

“I am the eye of day,

And all men love me ;” and, with drowsy sighs,

A Lotus, from the still pond where she lay,

Breathed, “I am precious balm for weary eyes.”

Only the fair field Lily, slim and tall,

Spake not, for all ;

Spake not and did not stir,

Lapsed in some far and tender memory.

Softly I questioned her,

“And what of thee?”

And winds were lulled about the bended head,

And the warm sunlight swathed her as in a flame,

While the awed answer came,

“Hath He not said?”

AFTER THE WINTER RAIN.

AFTER the winter rain,
Sing, robin!—sing, swallow!

Grasses are in the lane,

Buds and flowers will follow.

Woods shall ring, blithe and gay,

With bird-trill and twitter,

Though the skies weep to-day,

And the winds are bitter.

Though deep call unto deep

As calls the thunder,

And white the billows leap

The tempest under;

.

Softly the waves shall come
Up the long, bright beaches,
With dainty flowers of foam
And tenderest speeches. . . .

After the wintry pain,
And the long, long sorrow,
Sing, heart!—for thee again
Joy comes with the morrow.

OBLIVION.

BEYOND the flight of hours,
Beneath the rooted flowers,
Where winter rain, nor showers
Of April, fall ;
Where days that say "Alas !"
Forget to come, to pass ;
And joy or grief that was,
Is ended all.

There never sunlight gleams ;
There sleep begets not dreams ;
Therein no voice of streams,
Nor voice of trees.
From shadow into sun,

From light to shadow won,
No shining rivers run
To shining seas.

No birds of morning throat
Their joy from skies remote ;
From the still leaves no note

On either hand ;

No love-lorn nightingale,
That sings while stars wax pale,
And moonlight, as a veil,
Is on the land.

Many the dwellers are
Within that valley far,
Lit by nor sun nor star,
Where no dawn is ;

Where sleep broods as a dove ;
And love forgot of love,
The dead delights thereof
 Can never miss.

Wherein is spoken word,
Nor any laughter heard ;
The eyelids are not stirred
 By touch of tears ;
Wherein the poet's brain
The rapture and the pain
Of song knows not again,
 Through all the years.

Pale leaves of poppies shed
About the brows and head,
From whence the laurel, dead,

Is dropped to dust.
Strength laid in armor down
To mold, and on the gown
The mold, and on the crown
The mold and rust.

So evermore they lie :
The ages pass them by,
Them doth the Earth deny,
And Time forget ;
Void in the years, the ways,
As a star loosed from space,
Upon whose vacant place
The sun is set.

QUESTION AND ANSWER.

“WHAT gift hast thou for Me,
The Crucified for thee?”

No worthy thing :
Nor song, nor praise, nor tears,
From all these many years,
Jesus, my King.

“In ways thy feet have sought,
In that thy hands have wrought,
Whatso for Me?”

Ah, in those dreary walks,
Behold the flowerless stalks,
The fruitless tree !

“Thy heart hath love, at least—
I crave thy love.” O Priest,

It were not meet
 From bitter wells to slake
 Thy thirst. Touch thou, and make
 Its waters sweet.

“Thy soul—that it may live!”

Is it then mine to give?

O Saviour, cease!

Like to a troubled sea,

My spirit is in me:

Lord, speak it peace.

“Unto thy Friend, thy King,

Hast then no offering,

No gift to give?”

For all Thy love, Thy care,

Only one little prayer:

Saviour, forgive!

TO-DAY'S SINGING.

WEAVE me a rhyme to-day :
No pleasant roundelay,
But some vague, restless yearning of the heart
Shaped with but little art
To broken numbers, that shall flow
Most dreamily and slow.
I think no merry fancy should belong
To this day's song.

Look how the maple stands,
Waving its bleeding hands
With such weird gestures ; and the petals fall
From the dry roses—pale, nor longer sweet :

And by the garden-wall
The unclasped vines, and all
These sad dead leaves, a-rustle at our feet.

Dear bodies of the flowers,
From which the little fragrant souls are fled,
Beside you, lying dead,
We say, "Another summer shall be ours
When all these naked boughs shall flush and flame
With fresh, young blossoms." Aye, but not the
same!

And that is saddest. By the living bloom,
Who cares for last year's beauty—in the tomb?

Spring, blossom, and decay.
Ah, poet, sing thy day—
So brief a day, alas!

Beloved, and shall we pass
Beneath the living grass,
Out from the glad, warm splendor of the sun?
A little dust about some old tree's root,
With all our voices mute,
And all our singing done?

FRUITIONLESS.

AH! little flower, up-springing, azure-eyed,
The meadow-brook beside,
Dropping delicious balms
Into the tender palms
Of lover-winds, that woo with light caress:
In still contentedness,
Living and blooming thy brief summer-day.
So wiser far than I,
That only dream and sigh,
And sighing, dream my listless life away!

Ah, sweet-heart birds, a-building your wee house,
In the broad-leavéd boughs!
Pausing with merry trill
To praise each other's skill,

And nod your pretty heads with pretty pride ;

Serenely satisfied

To trill and twitter love's sweet roundelay.

So happier than I,

That, lonely, dream and sigh,

And sighing, dream my lonely life away !

Brown-bodied bees, that scent with nostrils fine

The odorous blossom-wine ;

Sipping, with heads half thrust

Into the pollen dust

Of rose and hyacinth and daffodil :

To hive, in amber cell,

A honey feasting for the winter-day.

So better far than I,

Self-wrapt, that dream and sigh,

And sighing, dream my useless life away !

THE FADED FLOWER.

WE watched in the dear Home garden

Our tenderest flower that grew :

Never a budling rarer

The sun of the ages knew !

And we said, "When our leaves shall wither,

Our petals shall drop away,

The grace of this perfect blossom

Shall brighten our own decay."

Never the dews shall nourish,

Never the tender rain ;

Never the sun's warm kisses

Shall crimson thy lips again !

O heart of our hearts, May-blossom,
Hope of our lessening day,
The bloom and the grace and the fragrance,
Are passed with thy breath away !

DAISIES.

WHEREFORE is it, as I pass
Through the fragrant meadow-grass,
That the daisies, nestling shyly in sweet places,
Lifting crispy, curly heads
From their wee, warm clover-beds,
Seem to my imagining, little elfin faces.

Can it be the daisies speak?
Leaning rosy cheek to cheek,
In a merry gossiping, lightly nodding after?
Or a fancy, that I heard
Just the faintest whispered word,
And a silver-echoing ripple of soft laughter?

"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE."

A LARK'S song dropped from heaven,

A rose's breath at noon ;

A still, sweet stream that flows and flows

Beneath a still, sweet moon :

A little way-side flower

Plucked from the grasses, thus !

A sound, a breath, a glance—and yet

What is 't they bring to us ?

For the world grows far too wise,

And wisdom is but grief :

Much thought makes but a weary way,

And question, unbelief.

Thank God for the bird's song,
And for the flower's breath!
Thank God for any voice to wake
The old sweet hymn of faith!

For a world grown all too wise,
(Or is 't not wise enough)?
Thank God for anything that makes
The path less dark and rough!

MEADOW - LARKS.

SWEET, sweet, sweet! O happy that I am!
(Listen to the meadow-larks, across the
fields that sing),

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O subtle breath of balm!
O winds that blow, O buds that grow, O rap-
ture of the spring.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O skies, serene and blue,
That shut the velvet pastures in; that fold the
mountain's crest!

Sweet, sweet, sweet! What of the clouds ye
knew?

The vessels ride a golden tide, upon a sea at
rest.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! Who prates of care and
pain?

Who says that life is sorrowful? O life so
glad, so fleet!

Ah! he who lives the noblest life finds life the
noblest gain,

The tears of pain a tender rain to make its
waters sweet.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O happy world that is!

Dear heart, I hear across the fields my mate-
ling pipe and call.

Sweet, sweet, sweet! O world so full of bliss!

For life is love, the world is love, and love is
over all!

I CAN NOT COUNT MY LIFE A LOSS.

I CAN not count my life a loss,
With all its length of evil days.

I hold them only as the dross
About its gold, whose worth outweighs;
For each and all I give Him praise.

For, drawing nearer to the brink
That leadeth down to final rest,
I see with clearer eyes, I think;
And much that vexed me and oppressed,
Have learned was right, and just, and best.

So, though I may but dimly guess

Its far intent, this gift of His
I honor; nor would know the less
One sorrow, or in pain or bliss
Have other than it was and is.

FROM LIVING WATERS.

COMMENCEMENT POEM, WRITTEN FOR THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA, JUNE, 1876.

*“INTO the balm of the clover,
Into the dawn and the dew,
Come, O my poet, my lover,
Single of spirit and true!*

*“Sweeter the song of the throstle
Shall ring from its nest in the vine,
And the lark, my beloved apostle,
Shall chant thee a gospel divine.*

*“Ah! not to the dullard, the schemer,
I of my fullness may give,*

*But thou, whom the world calleth dreamer,
Drink of my fountains and live!"*

O, and golden in the sun did the river waters run,
O, and golden in its shining all the mellow landscape lay;
And the poet's simple rhyme blended softly with
the chime
Of the bells that rang the noontide, in the city,
far away.

And the gold and amethyst of the thin, transparent mist,
Lifted, drifted from the ocean to the far horizon's rim,
Where the white, transfigured ghost of some vessel, long since lost,

Half in cloud and half in billow, trembled on
its utmost brim.

And I said, "Most beautiful, in thy noontide
dream and lull,
Art thou, Nature, sweetest mother, in thy summer
raiment drest;
Aye, in all thy moods and phases, lovingly I
name thy praises,
Yet through all my love and longing chafeth
still the old unrest."

*"Art thou a-worn and a-weary,
Sick with the doubts that perplex,
Come from thy wisdom most dreary,
Less fair than the faith which it wrecks?"*

*“Not in the tomes of the sages
Lieth the word to thy need ;
Truer my blossomy pages,
Sweeter their lessons to read.”*

“Aye,” I said, “but can it duly, who may read
the lesson truly ;
Who may grasp the mighty meaning, hidden
past our finding out?
From the weary search unsleeping, what is yielded
to our keeping?
All our knowledge, peradventure ; all our wisdom
merely doubt !

“O my Earth, to know thee fully ! I that love
thee, singly, wholly !

In thy beauty thou art veiled ; in thy melody
art dumb.

Once, unto my perfect seeing give this mystery
of being ;

Once, thy silence breaking, tell me, whither go
we? whence we come?"

And I heard the rustling leaves, and the sheaves
against the sheaves

Clashing lightly, clashing brightly, as they rip-
ened in the sun ;

And the gracious air astir with the insect hum
and whirr,

And the merry splash and ripple where the river
waters run :

Heard the anthem of the sea — that most mighty
melody —

Only these; yet something deeper than to own
my spirit willed.

Like a holy calm descending, with my inmost
being blending—

Like the “Peace” to troubled waters, that are
pacified and stilled.

And I said: “Ah, what are we? Children at the
Master’s knee—

Little higher than these grasses glancing upward
from the sods!

Just the few first pages turning in His mighty
book of learning—

We, mere atoms of beginning, that would wres-
tle with the gods!”

“In the least one of my daisies

*Deeper a meaning is set,
Than the seers ye crown with your praises,
Have wrung from the centuries yet.*

*“Leave them their doubt and derision;
Lo, to the knowledge I bring,
Clingeth no dimness of vision!
Come, O my chosen, my king!*

*“Out from the clouds that cover,
The night that would blind and betray,
Come, O my poet, my lover,
Into the golden day!”*

O, and deeper through the calm rolled the cease-
less ocean psalm;

O, and brighter in the sunshine all the meadows
stretched away;

And a little lark sang clear from the willow
branches near,

And the glory and the gladness closed about me
where I lay.

And I said: "Aye, verily, waiteth yet the mas-
ter key,

All these mysteries that shall open, though to
surer hand than mine;

All these doubts of our discerning, to the peace
of knowledge turning,

All our darkness, which is human, to the light,
which is divine!"

IN ADVERSITY.

FRIENDS whom I feasted in my luxury,
In sorrow turned from me.

A hundred servitors, that once did wait
Upon my high estate,

Me—desolate, forsaken, old, and poor—
Thrust from my own house-door.

Only that One whom I in joy forgot,
My fault remembered not,

And in my tears of late-born penitence
Drove me not, scorning, hence.

His strong arm raised me where I prostrate fell;
He made my bruised heart well;

My thirst He quenched; my hunger gave He bread;
And my weak steps He led

Through the blind dark of desert sands, to where
His fresh, green pastures were.

O, calm and fair the days, and all delights
Make beautiful the nights!

O, fair the nights, and beautiful the days,
Within these quiet ways!

What need is there which He may not supply?
Familiar steps go by,

And well-known voices die upon my ear—

But He is ever near !

The vision of all beauty and all grace

Is in His perfect face.

Sweeter His voice is than the melodies

Wherewith I lulled my ease.

Wisdom and truth, and measures of sweet song,

Unto His words belong ;

And to my lowly roof His presence brings

Splendor exceeding kings' !

SUMMONS.

O LONG, swinging bells of pomegranate !

O orange-buds, falling as snow !

O singing of lark and of linnet —

Singing high in the leaves, singing low —

Can you sing to my heart, can you win it

One moment to these, ere I go?

What flowers shall be sweeter than these are?

What sky shall be blue as this sky?

As a fair, fringed girdle the trees are,

About the green place where I lie ;

And the swarms of the brown honey-bees are

As clouds over clover and rye.

But ah ! for the singing of swallows

What thought, though the singing be sweet !

What ease, though the grass of the hollows

And hills be as down to my feet !

Love beckons, the ready heart follows,

How fleet to the summons, how fleet !

And unto the dove, as she cooeth,

It's O, for the wings of the dove !—

And unto the wind, as it bloweth,

For the pinions and fleetness thereof—

That the feet unto where the heart goeth

May be swift, may be swift, to my love !

SUFFICIENT.

CITRON, pomegranate,

Apricot and peach ;

Flutter of apple - blows

Whiter than the snow ;

Filling the silence

With their leafy speech,

Budding and blooming

Down row after row.

Breaths of blown spices,

Which the meadows yield ;

Blossoms broad-petaled,

Starry buds and small :

Gold of the hill-sides,
Purple of the field,
Waft to my nostrils
Their fragrance, one and all.

Birds in the tree-tops,
Birds that fill the air,
Trilling, piping, singing,
In their merry moods :
Gold wing and brown wing,
Flitting here and there,
To the coo and chirrup
Of their downy broods.

What grace has summer
Better that can suit?
What gift can autumn

Bring us more to please?
Red of blown roses,
Mellow tints of fruit,
Never can be fairer,
Sweeter than are these.

A PRAYER.

() SOUL! however sweet
The goal to which I hasten with **swift feet**—
If, just within my **grasp**,
I reach, and joy to **clasp**,
And find there one whose body I **must make**
A footstool for that sake,
Though ever and forevermore denied,
Grant me to turn aside!

O, howsoever dear
The love I long for, seek, and find **anear**—
So near, so dear, the bliss
Sweetest of all that is,

If I must win by treachery or art,
Or wrong one other heart,
Though it should bring me death, my soul, that day
Grant me to turn away!

That in the life so far
And yet so near, I be without a scar
Of wounds dealt others! Greet with lifted eyes
The pure of Paradise!
So I may never know
The agony of tears I caused to flow!

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In a barren land :
Dripping skies bent over,
Dripping skies that stand,
Forlorn, on either hand.

But a little sunshine—
How its voice shall wake !
Over sand and pebble
Ring the silver treble,
Glad for summer's sake !
Fairy boats shall ride it,
Lovers walk beside it,
Birds build in the brake ;
Flowers and flowering sedges
Laugh along its edges—
Glad, for summer's sake !

Just a little sunshine,
And the clouds will part ;
All its fettered beauty
Into life will start.
Be glad, thou shining rover,
With bird, and bee, and clover :
Sing summer through and over,
Ah, happy that thou art !
Just a little sunshine —
O my heart, my heart !

AN EMBLEM.

I WAITED for a single flower to blow,
While all about me flowers were running wild:
Gold-hearted kingcups, sunnily that smiled,
And daisies like fresh-fallen flakes of snow,
And rarest violets, sweet whole colonies
Nestled in shady grasses by the brooks,
That sang, for love of them and their sweet
looks,
Delicious melodies.

Now they are perished, all the fragile throng,
That held their sweetness up to me in vain.
Only this single blossom doth remain,
For whose unfolding I have waited long,

Thinking, "How rare a bloom these petals clasp!"

And lo! a sickly, dwarfed, and scentless thing,

Mocking my love and its close nourishing,

And withering in my grasp.

O dream! O hope! O promise of long years:

Art thou a flower that I have nurtured so,

Missing the every-day sweet joys that grow

By common pathways; moistened with my tears,

Watched through the dreary day and sleepless

night,

And all about thy slender rootlets cast

My life like water, but to find at last

A bitterness and blight?

FORGOTTEN.

OH, my heart, when life is done,
How happy will the hour be !

All its restless errands run :
Noontide past, and set of sun,
And the long, long night begun ;
How happy will the hour be !

Sunlight, like a butterfly,
Drop down and kiss the roses ;
Starlight, softly come and lie
Where dreamful slumber closes ;
But Death, sweet Death, be nigh, be nigh,
Where love in peace reposes !

CHRISTMAS EVE.

PEACE in thy snowy breast,
O cloud, from storms at rest !
Peace in the winds that sleep
Upon the deep.

Peace in the starry height :
Peace infinite,
Through all the worlds that move
Within His love.

O, all sad hearts, that be
On land or on the sea,
God's peace with you rest light
This Christmas night !

And with the souls that stand

In that dear land

Where pain and all tears cease,

Most perfect peace !

FULFILLMENT.

FOR the fledgeling bird-life stilled,
 Its wings untaught,
 Its music all untrilled ;
For the poet's voiceless thought,
 The song unsung ;
For the loving heart unsought ;
 Hope, fair and sweet and young,
 Dead — nor forgot ;
For the seed that is not sown,
And the bud that falls unblown,
 What shall atone ?

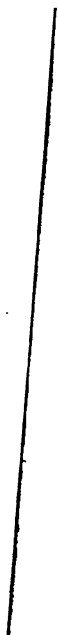
Somewhere the seed must spring,
 The song be sung ;

Somewhere, green boughs among,
The bird must sing,
Must brood and build ;
Somewhere the heart be wooed ;
Somewhere, far out of pain,
Hope, fair and strong, again
Rise from the tomb.
Somewhere, for God is good,
Life's blossoms, unfulfilled,
Must spring from dust and gloom
To perfect bloom.



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